PROSPECT; *or, View of the Moral World.*

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SUPERSTITION.

IT is by the ſlow progreſs of the human underſtanding that the evils of human life can be diminiſhed or deſtroyed. Superſtition preſents a formidable obſtacle to the diffuſion of ſcience and the augmentation of human happineſs. Nothing important can be done for the benefit of man, without a developement of the moral energies of his nature; but ſuperſtition holds him faſt, tells him it is a crime to think, and frightens him almoſt out of his ſenſes with ſpiritual ſpectres that have no real exiſtence. Thouſands of gods, ghoſts and devils have been fabricated with vaſt variety of characters on purpoſe to terrify weak and daluded man. A ſubordinate claſs of ſpiritual lackeys have alſo been created and ſent as Miſſionaries over the whole earth to frighten women and children. Of this ſort were the witches, the fairies and the ſprights of former days, and which, even now, form the baſis of univerſal terror in many countries. The Bible ſanctioned theſe incongruous ideas, and gave to nonentity the form, character and effect of real exiſtence. The clergy declare to the people that this is the beſt book in the world; they found their diſcourſes upon the incoherencies therein contained, and the people are ſwallowed up in a gulph of ſuperſtition from which they know not how to eſcape. Ye ſpiritual inſtructors of a loſt and wicked world! read over once the Books of Geneſis and Exodus, and ask yourſelves the queſtion, whether you would think it any honour to yourſelves to be the authors of ſuch a production? Would you not bluſh for many of the ſentiments therein contained, and do you imagine that ſuch compoſition would render your names illuſtrious in the great republic of letters? Superſtition and intereſt have combined to create and perpetuate an attachment to the ſacred writings of the Jews and Chriſtians. The age of happineſs muſt be that in which all theologi-

cal conceptions ſhall be concentered in the Theiſm of Nature, or the belief of one God. This God muſt be deſtitute of all iraſcible paſſions and malignant attributes of every kind; he muſt be a very different being from the God of the Old Teſtament, for the belief in ſuch a God produces the moſt deſtructive conſequences. Superſtition has always aſcribed to the divinities in whoſe exiſtence ſhe has placed confidence, a ſurplus of properties, and theſe properties were generally of a peſtilential and contagious kind. The diſeaſe thus caught was worſe than the yellow fever; it ſpread deſolation and death to all around; it carried conflagration and carnage over the whole earth; it ſhook to the foundation the tranquility of the world. Man cultivate thy reaſon and truth, virtue and happineſs will be the neceſſary conſequences.

THE

INDIAN STUDENT;

OR,

Force of Nature.

FROM Suſquehanna's fartheſt ſprings
Where ſavage tribes purſue their games,
(His blanket tied with yellow ſtrings,)
A ſhepherd from the foreſt came.

Not long before, a wandering prieſt
Expreſs'd his wiſh, with viſage ſad—
" Ah, why," he cry'd, " in Satan's waſte,
" Ah, why detain ſo fine a land?

" In white man's land there ſtands a town
" Where learning might be purchas'd low—
" Exchange his blanket for a gown,
" And let the lad to college go."

From long debate the council roſe,
And viewing Shalum's tricks with joy
IV. To Cambridge Hall, o'er waſtes of ſnows,
They ſent the copper-colour'd boy.

One generous chief a bow ſupply'd,
This gave a ſhaft, and that a ſkin:
The feathers, in vermillion dy'd,
Himſelf did from a turkey win:

Thus dreſs'd ſo gay, he took his way
O'er barren hills, alone, alone,
His guide a ſtar, he wander'd far,
His pillow every night a ſtone.

At laſt he came with foot ſo lame,
Where learned men talk heathen Greek,
And Hebrew lore is gabbled o'er,
To pleaſe the Muſes,—twice a week.

A while he writ, a while he read,
V. A while he conn'd their grammar rules—
(An Indian ſavage ſo well bred
Great credit promis'd to the ſchools.)

Some thought he would in law excel,
VI. Some ſaid in phyſic he would ſhine;
And one that knew him, paſſing well,
Beheld, in him, a ſound divine.

But thoſe of more diſcerning eye
VII. Even then could other proſpects ſhow,
And ſaw him lay his Virgil by
To wander with his dearer bow.

The tedious hours of ſtudy ſpent,
VIII. The heavy moulded lecture done,
He to the woods a hunting went,
Thro' lonely waſtes he walk'd, he ran.

No myſtic wonders fir'd his mind;
He ſought to gain no learn'd degree,
But only ſenſe enough to find
The ſquirrel in the hollow tree.

The ſhady bank the purling ſtream,
The woody wild his heart poſſeſs'd,
The dewy lawn, his morning dream
In fancy's gayeſt colours dreſs'd.

"And why (he cry'd) did I forſake
"My native wood for gloomy walls;
"The ſilver ſtream, the limpid lake
"for muſty books, and college halls.

"A little could my wants ſupply—
"Can wealth and honour give me more;
"Or, will the ſylvan god deny
"The humble treat he gave before?

"Let ſeraphs gain the bright abode,
"And heaven's ſublimeſt manſion ſee—
"I only bow to Nature's God—
"The land of ſhades will do for me.

"Theſe dreadful ſecrets of the ſky
"Alarm my ſoul with chilling fear—
"Do planets in their orbits fly,
"And is the earth, indeed, a ſphere?

"Let planets ſtill their courſe purſue,
"And comets to the centre run—
"In him my faithful friend I view,
"The image of my God—the Sun.

"Where nature's ancient foreſts grow,
"And mingled laurel never fades,
"My heart is fixed;—and I muſt go
"To die among my native ſhades."

He ſpoke, and to the weſtern ſprings,
(His gown diſcharg'd, his money ſpent,
His blanket tied with yellow ſtrings,)
The ſhepherd of the foreſt went.

Returning to his rural plains
The Indians welcomed him with joy,
The council took him from a gaol
And blest the tawney colored boy.

TO THE EMPEROR OF CHINA.

AUGUST SIRE,

Theſe reflections led me to draw the contraſt between a Pagan and a Chriſtian prince. I then required of one of the holy fathers of the Romiſh Church, if he ſuppoſed the difference of characters and conduct, between the Heathen and Chriſtian, was the effect of the different religions? To which, with true prieſtly gravity, he replied, "Temporal happineſs, or miſery, are matters of ſmall moment to true Chriſtians, who always look beyond this world for their durable and ſubſtantial enjoyments." By which it would ſeem we are to underſtand, that virtuous Pagans receive their reward in this life, in the conſciouſneſs and ſweet conſolation of having done well, but that they have nothing (at leaſt no good) to expect hereafter. But as Chriſtian princes, from ſome ſtrange fatality, ſeem to be deprived of this temporal happineſs, ſo at the ſame time it appears leſs neceſſary and afflictive to them, ſeeing they are to be excluſively ſo well provided for in another world.

Such, however, are my eſteem and veneration for your Majeſty's pagan virtues, that, if it were lawful to pray for infidels, I ſhould be tempted to purchaſe ſome hundreds of maſſes, as alſo to make intereſt with all our different Chriſtian ſects, to exert all their powers, directly or indirectly, to obtain permiſſion, that your Majeſty's truly precious life might be extended to the greateſt antediluvian age, for the welfare of your ſubjects, and the prolongation of your own individual happineſs, reſulting from the conſciouſneſs of having fulfilled all the duties of your important ſtation, by contributing all in your extenſive power to promote the happineſs of your people.

I cannot refrain from offering my moſt cordial felicitations to your Chineſe Majeſty, on the geographical ſituation in which it has pleaſed Chang Ti, or it has been the good fortune of your royal anceſtors, to found your empire, which, with your impregnable walls, ſo happily

ſecure your dominions from Chriſtian invaſions and depredations. But, though in one view theſe circumſtances may be conſidered as a bleſſing, or ſubject to congratulation, yet there are thoſe among us, who looking beyond this world, though we call ourſelves ſhort-ſighted creatures, conſider them as your misfortune; becauſe, with an army of Chriſtian ſoldiers, they conclude would alſo be ſent, according to cuſtom, an hoſt of Chriſtian miſſionaries, to convert your Majeſty, and your people, to the true faith; which, though it might probably diſturb your temporal quiet, yet ultimately you would all be as happy as the conqueſts of Mexico and Peru have rendered the remnant of thoſe millions of native Pagans who once peopled thoſe vaſt, rich and fertile countries; but who unfortunately ſuccumbed under the violent religious operations of the ghoſtly Chriſtian fathers to ſave them.

But, before your Majeſty ſhall conclude to admit into your dominions, either Chriſtian ſoldiers or miſſionaries, or even to communicate too freely with European emiſſaries of any deſcription or country whatever, I would beg leave to recommend to your peruſal, thoſe European hiſtories in which are detailed the religious wars and cruſades of the various European Chriſtian powers againſt infidels; theſe will inſtruct your Majeſty in the benefits to be derived from converſion, and how far you may ſafely extend your confidence and communications with the true believers, conſiſtent with the peace, ſafety and happineſs of your perſon and people. But ſhould your Majeſty judge of thoſe hiſtories upon the principles of Pagan juſtice, or ſuch as appear to govern and direct your own conduct, you would probably conclude that, if the hiſtorians could have diverted themſelves to local and religious prejudices, and ſubſtituted the more liberal and enlightened ſentiments of citizens of the world, they could not have thus ſervilely triumphed in ſuch heroes and ſaints, nor audaciouſly trumpeted their praiſe; but thoſe boaſted idols of admiration would naturally have appeared, to more enlarged minds, as more fit objects of

abhorence and execration. There are, however, in Europe, who think it is not the man, or rather the monſter, who has waded deepeſt in blood—that it is not the conquerer, or rather the deſpoiler of a world, who is beſt entiled to the world's applauſe; but that it is the ſupporter, defender, and protector of the rights, liberties, peace, and temporal happineſs of mankind, who is truly great, and to whom the precious tributes of praiſe, gratitude, and love are juſtly due; it is Alexander the Firſt of Ruſſia, and not Alexander the Great, the Macedonian madman.

But it would ſeem that even a ſtate of long uninterrupted peace and proſperity is not without its inconveniencies, as, notwithſtanding the vaſt extent of your dominion, ſuch, we are told, is the immenſity of population, that the territory is incumbered with inhabitants, inſomuch that ſome writers pretend that one-fourth part of your ſubject are forced to live in boats on your rivers, and that many of the moſt indigent of them make no more ſcruple to drown their ſupernumerary infants, than the Europeans their ſurplus puppies and kittens. But though this ſeemingly barbarous cuſtoms in China is not to be compared with the more grievous and complicate evils reſulting from war, and though we are by no means inſenſible of the material difference between an infant born in a Chriſtian land, and a new-born Chineſe heathen brat; yet (probably from its novelty) it ſeems to ſtrike Chriſtians with much more horror than war, and is conſidered as an act of heathen barbarity. But, for my own part, I am free to confeſs, I do not thence infer that a Chineſe Pagan is more cruel than an European Chriſtian, becauſe I find the ſame tender-hearted Chriſtian, who ſeems to feel ſo ſenſibly for a Pagan germe, and who execrates the unnatural heathen monſter of a mother who is capable of of perpetrating ſuch an horrid deed, can, without remorſe, or even any plauſible, motive, deſtroy thouſands, and even tens of thouſands, of his much more uſeful fellow men and brother Chriſtians, in a day; thereby robbing of their props, ſupport, comfort, and protection, thoſands of innocent mothers, widows, and orphans.

Yet ſhould theſe murderers, or thoſe who charged them with the fatal commiſſion, be aſked why they committed ſuch horrid outrages againſt the laws of nature, of reaſon, of juſtice, of God, they could rarely aſſign with truth any other cauſes than ambition, avarice, and revenge; while the poor Chineſe mother, with a bleeding heart, is forced by miſery to commit an act of violence againſt herſelf, and for which ſhe is the only ſufferer: ſo that the mode adopted in Europe for thinning the country of its inhabitants muſt naturally appear to Pagan minds, much more cruel and unjuſt than that practiſed in China. But there is another argument more directly to the point, which proves that the Chriſtian mode of reaſoning is not only abſurd, but alſo that their conduct towards their own children is infinitely more cruel, unnatural, and unjuſt, than that of the Pagan: it is only among the moſt needy of the people in China, thar the ſeemingly cruel act of drowning ſome of their children is committed, and that immediately after the birth; which, when all circumſtances are conſidered without prejudice, will rather appear to be an act of humanity, and even maternal tenderneſs. Suppoſe, for example, a Chineſe mother to have two children, and that ſhe is able to ſupport but one, reaſon and humanity prompt her in ſuch a caſe to drown one, in order to preſerve the other from ſtarving; by which means ſhe may be conſidered as having preſerved both from dying by inches.

To be continued.

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